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A. S. WATSON & CO., LIMITED,  
The Hongkong Dispensary,  
Established A.D. 1841.

Hongkong, 2nd November, 1893.

**NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.**  
Only communications relating to the news column should be addressed to "The Editor". Correspondents are requested to forward their name and address, and a copy of any communication addressed to the Editor, not for publication, but for evidence of good faith.

All letters for publication should be written on one side of the paper only.

Anonymously signed communications that have appeared in other papers will be ignored.

Orders for extra copies of the *Daily Press* should be sent to the office at 1 a.m. on the day of publication. After that hour the supply is limited. Only supplied for cash.

Telegraphic Address: *Press*, P.O. Box 20. Telephone No. 12.

**BIRTH.**  
On the 13th November, at No. 3, Mountain View, the Park, the wife of ALFRED J. MAY, of a son, 1246.

The Daily Press.

HONGKONG, NOVEMBER 14TH, 1893.

The Acting Governor of the Straits Settlements does not regard the idea of a Retrenchment Commission with so much aversion as has been displayed in Hongkong. In his address at the opening of the session of the Straits Legislative Council the other day Mr. MAXWELL said that he would be prepared to at once appoint a Committee of the Council to consider and report upon retrenchment, were it reasonably convenient to do so under existing circumstances, but he thought it would be preferable that the appointment of such a committee should be deferred, at all events until after the arrival of Sir CHARLES MITCHELL in January next. In the meantime the estimates for next year appear to have been framed, so far as it is possible to judge from this distance, with a reasonable regard to economy. The principal reason of the straitened condition of the finances in the Straits is of course the military contribution. A few years ago the expenditure under this head was between \$300,000 and \$350,000 a year, while it is now from \$800,000 to \$850,000, and as the amount is payable in sterling (£100,000) the exchange question becomes almost as important for the Straits, in proportion to the amount of its budget, as it has of late years been in India. Should the dollar fall to two shillings or eighteen-pence, increased taxation to meet the home charges could hardly be avoided if those charges remained at the same figure in sterling as at present. Similar considerations apply in the case of Hongkong, except that in this Colony the military contribution is fixed at a lower sum, namely, £40,000, but even on that amount it would be not more than reasonable to allow a margin of \$80,000 in converting it into silver, for no one can tell whether it will have to be paid at the rate of eight dollars to the pound or ten dollars, unless indeed the Government takes the precaution of securing its exchange in advance. Interest on the loans, payment of pensions, and other home charges all go to swell the element of uncertainty, and here, as at Singapore, the choice, as the *Straits Times* expresses it, is between pernicious thrift or increase of taxation. Our case is, perhaps, not so desperate as that of Singapore; indeed, our financial position is eminently sound, but with the uncertainty of exchange and the probability of a falling off in the opium revenue at the next meeting of the farm, a policy of thrift is incumbent upon the Government. Even Singapore is not so badly off if it be still prevailing.

True, as stated by the *Straits Times*, there is in all the English-governed world (British India excepted) no community more lightly taxed than the community of the Straits. Why British India should be excepted we do not know, for it is not generally understood that taxation of that country is particularly light. That, however, is an irrelevant point.

One contemporary, while advocating a policy of thrift rather than one of increased taxation suggests some of the directions in which taxation might be increased were it deemed desirable. These suggestions are embodied in the following passage:—"The resources from which this Colony might derive new revenue are innumerable. The consumption of whisky in this Colony is very large, for it is drunk not only by Europeans but in an increasing degree by Asiatics. As the Asiatics are more numerous, the total quantity drunk by them is, of course, much the larger. And whisky in the Straits is taxed twenty-one pence per gallon, as against half-a-guinea per gallon in England. The consumption of wine and beer in this Colony is not small; and these drinks are duty-free, as against the material duties that are imposed in England. The consumption of tobacco in this Colony is very large, because that is not smoked only by Europeans but in an increasing degree by Asiatics. Acid tobacco in the Straits is duty-free, as against three shillings and two pence per pound on unmanufactured tobacco in England, and five shillings per pound of Philipps' duty on cigars. Further, there is no income tax in this Colony, as against a large and onerous income tax levied in England. Imposed by Commissioners with wide and arbitrary discretion, would yield enormous sums."

In this colony we have hitherto avoided the establishment of a Spirit Farm, and we are inclined to think neither the European nor Chinese communities would willingly accept such an institution. The Opium Farm causes sufficient annoyance to make us weary of bringing another evil of like kind upon the colony. Indeed, by some whose opinion must be held entitled to respect it is considered that it would be advisable to do away with the Opium Farm, even if it involved increased taxation in other directions. Such an article as opium is eminently a fit subject for taxation if any unquestionable means of collecting the tax can be devised, and the same remark would apply to spirits, but to farm out the tax and subject the community to all the annoyance caused by the present opium system is, to say the least of it, paying a high price for the revenue. The evils of the Opium Farm do not come very prominently under the notice of the bulk of the European community, but they are now the less great, and amongst the Chinese the feeling of irritation engendered is very keen. While the natives come here readily enough to ply their avocations, because they find profit therein, they are very slow to establish their family residences here. One of the reasons for this is the annoyance of the system by which the opium revenue is collected. Moreover, Chinese passengers travelling between Canton and the North avoid Hongkong if they can, on account of the indigencies to which they are liable to be subjected, for on landing at the port they will probably be pounced on and have their persons searched in a way that no one could bear with unmixed temper. Such a state of things is altogether undesirable and to a greater or lesser extent militates against the prosperity of the colony. The policy should be to cause Hongkong to be looked upon as a desirable place either to reside in or to visit rather than as a place to be shunned. When the present lease of the Opium Farm expires it is not improbable that a system of raising the revenue by taxing the opium as it enters the Colony may be suggested. This would have the appearance of establishing customs dues and infringing the freedom of the port, but opium entering the Colony has under existing conditions to be reported to the Government, and to levy the tax at that point would certainly seem not more objectionable than the present system. But whatever may be said with regard to opium we certainly want no more Farms to levy taxes either on spirits or any other article. Such taxes as it may be necessary to raise let the Government raise directly instead of by the agency of Farms.

The M. M. steamer *Satsuma* left Saigon for this port at 8 a.m. yesterday.

There were 2,131 visitors to the City Hall Museum last week, when 128 were Europeans.

The E. & A. steamer *Minnow*, from Australia, sailed from Manila on Saturday, and is due here this morning.

The N. G. I. steamer *Gloria* left Bombay for this port on the 11th inst., and may be expected about the end of the month.

The entry money to the Singapore Club has been raised from fifty to one hundred dollars. The monthly subscription has been raised from two to five dollars.

Mr. H. Graves, who represents Messrs. Grassi Brothers in the master of the projected Malacca Railway, which is being submitted to the Secretary of State, is in the meanwhile, the *Straits Times* says, to survey the line for the shortest route to Johor and draw up detailed plans and estimates.

About four o'clock yesterday morning a collision was discovered wandering about the fowl house in Victoria English School, and as two provisions of the school were missing, it was against him, Commander Hastings, at the Police Court yesterday morning sentenced the defendant to nine months' imprisonment with hard labour.

The British steamer *Bas* *What's Soon*, on arrival at Singapore from Penang, reported that, on the 19th ult., a boy of Penang, aged 14, left New York, 10<sup>th</sup> ult., Esq. He spoke the fast freight ship *Angela* of London, 1,690 tons, from New York bound for Hongkong, 93 days out, which wished to be reported all well.

Another death from hydrophobia is reported from Singapore. The victim was a Dalmatian dog, belonging to Dr. B. C. D. of the steamer *De Cupere*. About five months ago he was bitten on the ear by the ship's dog. No ill effects were felt until a few days ago, when symptoms of hydrophobia set in and the sufferer was sent to the hospital, where he died.

Some apprehension is being felt in shipping circles for the safety of the steamer *Pathein*, which left Bangkok with a cargo of rice on the 29th ult., bound for Hongkong, and has not since been heard of. The agents (Messrs. Bradley and Co.) inform us, however, that no fears need at present be entertained, as it is very likely she has run in for shelter from the heavy seas now prevailing.

The "Bas" Line steamer *Bengawan* left Singapore on Saturday for this port.

An enquiry will be held this afternoon at 2.30 at the Magistrate's office in this neighbourhood attending the recent fatal fire in Square street.

The P. & O. steamer *Boots* left Singapore for this port at 4 p.m. on Sunday and may be expected to arrive at 8 a.m. on Saturday, 18th inst.

A steamer, supposed to be the French cruiser *Savoie*, came through Singapore on the 24th ult. from west to east.

Another fat bole—Mak Chuk, of Fuk Chow, landed yesterday before the Magistrate yesterday charged by Inspector H. H. Hodson, creating a nuisance by selling "noises and offensive" beef fat on Oct. 25th. Mr. H. E. Wedderburn imposed a fine of \$10.

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The Band of the 1st Shropshire Light Infantry will play the following programme at the Officers' Mess this evening, commencing at 8 o'clock:

Overture. "Munstello" ..... Andante.

"Song of the Night" ..... Andante.

"The Marchioness" ..... Andante.

"An Clair de Lune" ..... Praelud.

"La Cigarrera" ..... Haydn, Parry.

"Trinity in Bed" ..... Finale.

At Singapore the other day the cashier employed at the Hospital went to the Bank and drew the salary of the hospital staff, placing the money on his return in the safe, with the intention of putting the salaries next day. In the meantime, as the cashier had not carried away bodily, and up to the time of our arrival Singapore Admiraus no trace had been found of it. The cash amounted to \$1,300. The safe was kept in the store-room, the door of which was found unlocked in the morning.

The *Tungking Paper Land Co.* Limited, in liquidation, has obtained leave in the Supreme Court at Singapore to serve writs out of the jurisdiction of the court for unpaid calls on shares held in the company upon Captain Maurice Cameron, R.E., of "The Castle", Dover, England, for \$2,583, calls and interest on 50 shares; A. G. Strode, broker, Hongkong, for \$2,931, calls and interest on 55 shares; G. A. Witt, merchant, of 4 Queen's St., London, for \$1,077, calls and interest on 100 shares.

Sunday morning a constable observed a man go into a pawn shop and endeavour to raise a few dollars on a gold watch which was lost not long ago by Mr. C. N. Young, of the Gas Works. The man applied to the pawnbroker, who was arrested and charged yesterday before Mr. H. E. Woodhouse. It is difficult to say if he did not remember how he obtained the timekeeper, but he called to mind pinning the chain a little while ago. He was committed for trial at the Criminal Sessions.

The San Francisco *Call* makes the following announcement:—"They appear to be perfectly aware that a new community may presently knock at the door of the house of nations here for admission. This is the Philippine Islands, which have been a Spanish colony for over 300 years. For a long period this colony has been a burden to Spain. In 1890 the debt was \$1,500,000, and though the original sum was repaid, a uniform rate of interest of 5 per cent. being exacted for the old complicated system and all except what was required to contemplate the annexation of the Philippines, especially, is pointed to as precedent which completely cuts the ground from under our feet. But the fact is overlooked that annexation was forced upon us by intrigues which were designed to draw Masaya under the influence of France, and which have been all along concealed, and the result is conceivably served up for English advantage.

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